

Heart and Stroke Foundation to honour local donor

By: Ashley Prest

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Elba Haid was a teen when she lost her mother to a stroke. Since then, the Winnipeg entrepreneur has been on a path to make a difference in women's heart and brain health.

Haid, chief executive officer of home care provider Real Care Inc., donated \$100,000 earlier this year as a founding member of the Women's Heart and Brain Initiative in Manitoba. Haid and her late husband, Marshall, will be recognized Friday afternoon when a plaque in their honour will be placed in the University of Manitoba's Active Living Centre.

"I believe in giving back to the community, but also due to my own personal experiences with respect to the devastating impacts of heart and stroke, I felt a very strong commitment to take a major role in this undertaking," Haid explained.

"I lost my mother to a stroke when I was only 14 years of age. Growing up without a mother has had a profound impact on my life, and I believe in doing everything possible to save other young women from a similar experience. I have also lost a sister to heart disease, along with my husband and brother, and my remaining sister suffers from heart disease."

Yves Savoie, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, who will be in Winnipeg to make Friday's presentation, said Haid's gift is already having a meaningful impact.

"She is a trail blazer. She is the first woman in Western Canada to have made a gift, be an ambassador and to show leadership," Savoie said. "We are big funders of research at



Elba Haid

the University of Manitoba, and they extend to us the privilege of recognizing donors to heart and stroke.

"It's a really nice arrangement that we are able to recognize one of our Winnipeg donors in the university here in the city."

Haid said her vision of what the Women's Heart and Brain Initiative will do now and in the future is to change lives and save lives. Funds donated to it are earmarked for research that specifically includes sex- and gender-biased analysis and reporting.

"The statistics are alarming, considering that heart and stroke is the No. 1 killer of women, outpacing death from breast cancer by five times. Imagine, too, that a woman dies from a heart- or stroke-related disease in Canada every 20 minutes," she said.

"What is particularly alarming to me is the fact that, up until now, women have been under-researched, leading to being misdiagnosed. Heart and stroke symptoms

manifest themselves differently for women than they do for men. If more women were made aware of this fact and more women knew what signs to look for, then more women could seek treatment before it's too late."

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She said the initiative's goal is to raise \$1 million in Manitoba by August 2019.

"I am encouraging everyone to donate as much as they can toward this worthwhile project. Every dollar counts, and we want to save more lives," Haid said.

In addition to raising awareness and research, Savoie said the Women's Heart and Brain initiative is also pressing governments across Canada for change in cardiac rehabilitation for women who are recovering from heart attacks or strokes.

"Fifty per cent of women don't complete cardiac rehab, even though we know these programs improve and save lives," Savoie said. He said the statistic can be related to challenges unique to women in accessing the programs due to proximity or responsibilities linked to often being caregivers in their families.

"We need to ensure that our health-care system responds to the reality of the inequity, and access for women to these kinds of programs is a critical kind of change required."

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BY THE NUMBERS

Focal points and facts of the Women's Heart and Brain Initiative in Manitoba, and the national #TimeToSeeRed awareness campaign

Women are six times more likely to die from heart disease or stroke than breast cancer

Almost twice as many women as men go to long-term care after stroke

Two-thirds of heart disease and stroke clinical research focuses on men

Stroke in pregnant women is three times higher than stroke in non-pregnant women of the same age

Heart disease is the leading cause of premature death for women in Canada

One-third more women die of stroke than men in Canada

Of all deaths from stroke, 59 per cent are women, 41 per cent men

Heart attacks in women are more deadly.

Women who have a heart attack are more likely to die or suffer a second heart attack compared to men

— source: heartandstroke.ca

HISTORY

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